



Manassas National Battlefield Park Bypass



Above: Civil War cannon at the Manassas National Battlefield Park. (Photo by M. McCutcheon)

Project Description. This project involves the relocation of U.S. Route 29 (US 29) and State Route 234 (SR 234) outside the boundaries of Manassas National Battlefield Park (MANA), and the closure of existing US 29 and SR 234 within the park to through traffic.

Background. Substantial non park-related, local commuting vehicle traffic along US 29 and SR 234, which currently bisects the battlefield, has had negative impacts on the park for decades. More than 26,000 vehicles per day use SR 234 and US 29 with as much as 12.6% being heavy commercial vehicles. Traffic models reflect significant increases in the number of vehicles by 2040 as areas around the battlefield still have substantial development occurring. This high traffic creates serious congestion in the center of the park where the main interpretive efforts and visitation is focused. Closure of these roads is needed to enhance the park experience, improve historic preservation efforts, and allow for better park operation and management.

A bypass for SR 234 around the battlefield was first studied in the late 1970s and was put into legislation in the Manassas National Battlefield Amendments of 1980 (P.L.96-442§2(c)). This was further defined in the Manassas National Battlefield Park Amendments of

1988 which included a provision authorizing a study regarding “the relocation of highways (known as US 29 and SR 234) in and in the vicinity of” the park. (PL 100-647§10004)

In 2008, the General Management Plan for Manassas was published and included the MANA Bypass as part of the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative proposes a future condition at the park to focus on interpreting the two battles of Manassas. Overall visitor experience and safety would be enhanced by the construction of the MANA Bypass. Without the heavy commuter and commercial truck traffic that run through the park, the visitor would experience a battlefield landscape that more closely resembles its historic appearance.

The MANA Bypass Study draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) was completed on January 28, 2005. The Virginia Commonwealth Transportation Board approved the location of the Bypass by resolution dated June 15, 2006 and the project was placed on the region’s Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) in 2012.

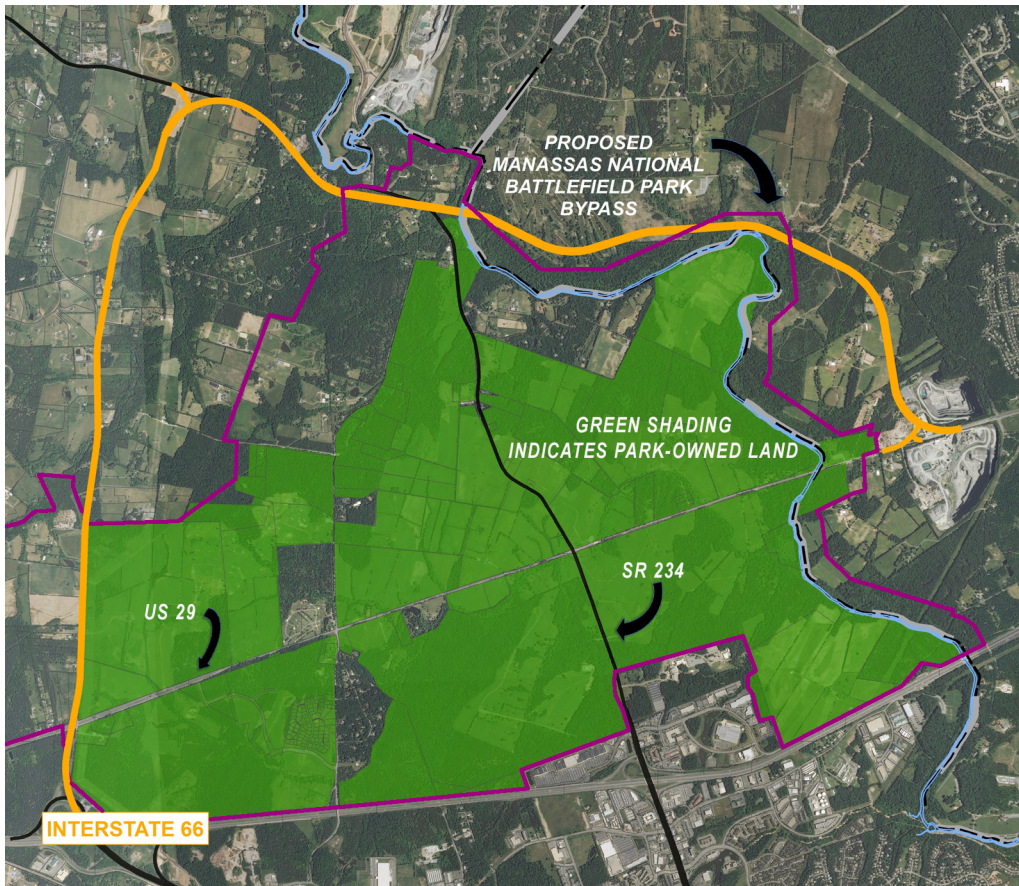
The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has been evaluating alternatives for a transportation corridor—the Bi-County

Mega-Project* Profile: Manassas National Battlefield Park Bypass

Estimated cost: \$303 million
(preliminary)

1,611% of the National
Capital Region (NCR) Annual
Allotment

Percentage of NPS FLTP
Annual Allotment: 148%



Above: Detail from the Manassas National Battlefield Park Bypass Study, 6 July 2005. (Prince William County Transportation Division.) The thin purple line indicates the Park boundary; the solid green overlay indicates the land owned by the Park.

* Mega Projects: The NPS transportation system is supported, in part, by funds from the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP). Currently, the NPS is authorized an annual budget of \$268 million from the FLTP. These funds are apportioned by formula among the seven NPS Regions. Most of these funds are used for "transportation asset management" – that is, to pay for the work required to keep existing assets in good condition. There are some projects, such as a major bridge repair or ship replacement, that require a much larger amount of funding than is available on an annual basis to a Region. These we call "Mega Projects." The NPS is pursuing strategies to fund these projects.

Parkway. This north-south road that would link the Manassas area with the Dulles corridor in Loudoun County. The Bi-County Parkway corridor overlaps with the MANA Park Bypass corridor on the western edge of the park boundary from I-66 to the south and the intersection with SR 234 to the north. The NPS has been working with VDOT to realize the Bi-County Parkway in order to protect the historic integrity of the Park, improve visitor experience and reduce the amount of non-park traffic within the Park.

Current Status. VDOT has postponed work on the Final EIS for the Bi-County Parkway corridor, awaiting a Virginia Legislative analysis and prioritization via the House Bill Two (HB2) framework. HB2 requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to develop and implement a quantifiable and transparent prioritization process for making funding decisions or capacity enhancing transportation projects within the six-year improvement program.

For the MANA Bypass, the draft EIS has yet to be finalized, pending the completion of other VDOT projects (i.e., I-66, etc.) as they might impact the project findings and results.

Funding. To date, over \$2 million has been invested in the environmental compliance process for the MANA Bypass project. Project delivery costs for the entire facility are estimated at \$303 million, but about one-third of the proposed corridor is co-located with the proposed Bi-County Parkway project. The cost of the co-located portion of the project is about \$122 million, making the cost estimate for the MANA Bypass portion \$183 million.